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The people called Dissenters, in England, enumerated and Described.

UNDER the denomination of dissenters, all persons, ostensibly attached to Christianity, are included, who do not conform to the mode of worship established by law; but their religious views and habits are widely different; as will appear by the names of classes into which they are divided. These are Papists, Quakers, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Methodists.

Of the two first it is unnecessary to give a particular account in this statement. The Writer of this article will, therefore, confine his attention to the other four denominations of Christians, agreeably to the order in which they are announced.

We present the reader, in the first place, with a short history and character of the people called Presbyterians in South Britain. These have, in fact, no claim to the title by which they are distinguished, either on the ground of discipline or doctrine. In respect to the first, their Societies are strictly independent; as they have no organized Presbyteries, and no persons, not being members, take notice of the discipline of any particular church, or any of its transactions; otherwise than by making remarks and giving their advice as neighbors and detached individuals. In reference to the last, they have forsaken the doctrine of their forefathers as defined in the Assembly's Catechism; excepting, perhaps, a very small remnant of individuals found in some places. Arianism, combined with the tenets of Sabellius, in the first place, spread its baneful influence among them. After that Socinianism prevailed to a great extent, though not universally; and, in many instances terminated in Deism or a species of Scepticism equally pernicious. The result of this departure from evangelical truth has been, in respect to individuals, a glaring neglect of religious duties, and conformity to the world

and, relatively, to Societies, a rapid decrease of numbers.—Many families and individuals, especially those in opulent circumstances, have attached themselves to Episcopalians, to avoid the stigma which the latter ever endeavor to fix on Dissenters.—The truth is that, in England, when people have ceased to be attached to evangelical principles, the unanswerable arguments urged to justify and enforce Nonconformity are either forgotten or disregarded. Hence, many Societies, once respectable, have either ceased to exist, or exhibit a memorial of their former prosperity by a wretched remnant. So deleterious, indeed, has been the influence of Arians and Socinians to the cause of Christianity in South Britain as that, the Writer of this article conceives himself fully justified in applying to them the language of the prophet Joel: "the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness."

Here it is natural for the thinking Reader to enquire how came the portion of English Nonconformists, under consideration, to be distinguished by the name of Presbyterians, since they reject the theological doctrines and do not maintain the discipline of the Presbyterian Church? An easy answer is furnished by a retrospect of their history. At the time immediately subsequent to the reformation in England, many Ministers had embraced and set up the Presbyterian discipline and mode of worship. Hence Presbyteries existed in many places, when, in the reign of Charles II. the infamous act of uniformity became a law, depriving, at a single blow, of their support and posts of usefulness, all those Ministers, who could not conscienciously, and, therefore, would not, give a solemn declaration in writing of their belief, that, the book of common prayer contained nothing contrary to the word of God. By far the greater part had no opportunity of seeing that compilation before they were compelled to decide. The number of Ministers who were thus ejected from the Church, if the recollection of the Writer be correct, exceeded two thousand. Of these some had an income of five or six hundred pounds a year. Their distress was, afterwards, much increased by what was called the five mile act, which forbad any of them to reside within that distance of the place where they had labored. Thus, were they deprived of an opportunity to receive a plate of victuals from the tables of those opulent Christians who had been edified by their preaching. Before the ejection, Dissenters existed, but that event greatly increased their number and respectability; for, thus, they received a vast accession of piety, learning and talents. In circumstances of persecution and distress, the Presbyterian discipline, not being practicable, gradually fell into utter neglect. But, nevertheless, the separate body of Christians, thus formed, continued to be distinguished by the same denomination. Long did they remain eminently estimable for what is most valuable in character; and might have retained their pre-eminence, had they not renounced the doctrines

of the reformation, and become destitute of evangelical piety.—It is readily admitted, that, in very populous places, such as London, Birmingham, Manchester and Bristol, there are large societies consisting, in a great measure, of persons distinguished by their opulence, general information, talent and weight of character. To these, it is believed, belongs a large portion of liberality, humanity and practical benevolence; but, in the estimation of the writer, their characters are not marked by evangelical piety; and it is apprehended, that modern philosophy has deprived many of them of a large portion of those humane virtues, which they may be said to have inherited from their forefathers. Of the character of their forefathers, it is thought, they are wholly divested, except a single feature: their tenacity of the rights of conscience and their opposition to spiritual tyranny. But on the part of a large proportion of those now in the vigour of life, this characteristic is thought to have degenerated in an entire want of deference for their Ministers; so that they are precluded from deriving that improvement from the labors of their Pastors which they, otherwise, might reap.

Independents.

Of this denomination there was in England an indefinite number of Christians at an early period. Having originated from one Brown, they were, after the name of their founder, called Brownists. That man, like too many leaders of parties, was more governed by factious zeal than moral principle; for he conformed, for the sake of a benefice, to the Church of England, proved a dissipated character, and died at Northamton a victim to intemperance. His apostacy did not put an end to the sect to which he had given rise; for Christians, maintaining his tenets, have not only continued to exist in societies; but have had from various sources, to the present day, great accessions to their numbers. Sometimes the divine influence, attending a faithful ministry of the Gospel in an independent place of worship; sometimes the introduction of an evangelical preacher to an old Presbyterian society nearly extinct; and sometimes the death of an evangelical minister in the established Church, whose labours had been the means to form a body of serious Christians, but whose successor was a stranger to experimental religion and an enemy to the doctrines of grace; has contributed largely to increase that portion of the dissenting interest. Within the last thirty years, we have, often, witnessed the like result from the labors of preachers, scarcely half educated, under the patronage of Lady Huntington; who, going out into the high ways and hedges, have compelled many to come in. It was not indeed their original design to promote the cause of Nonconformity; for they have been known to apply the term *dissenter*, reproachfully, to a horse remarkable for his bad qualities, though they were glad of the patronage of the dissenters, in places where they were despised (and that was generally the

case) by the Episcopalians.—Not unfrequently, also, persons, who had first received serious impressions under the ministry of John Wesley's lay preachers, have eventually been glad to avail themselves of a more solid and intelligent kind of religious instruction among regular Independents.

The original Independents, besides what is common to congregational Churches, had several peculiarities of character; but those being now nearly extinct, we shall consign them to oblivion, with one exception. They seriously objected to reading of the scriptures as a part of religious service in the house of God. In the present day, however, this culpable neglect is not known to attach to one dissenting congregation in Great Britain; and it is believed that even the first Independents kept a Bible and a Psalm-book in the Pulpit. At this time, to find the sacred desk without its APPROPRIATE FURNITURE would be regarded, in any part of England, as a most deplorable symptom. There, indeed, Bibles and Hymn-books are generally found in the Pews, and are in constant use during the hours of Public Worship. It is hoped that, a word to the wise will be enough.

At present, societies, nominally Presbyterian as well as those styled Independent, may be said to practise congregationalism as maintained in New England. Their Ministers, also, form themselves into Associations for the purpose of friendly intercourse, by conversation and preaching in each other's pulpits; rather than of transacting public business in their collective capacity. Nevertheless, when a Minister is to be ordained or installed in a vacant congregation, the pastors of other congregations, within the limits of the same Association, are, generally, requested to assist at the solemnity. The principal difference, between those now called Presbyterians and Independents, is that, the former are not only anti-calvinistic but very lax in their mode of admitting communicants, as well as inattentive to instances of immoral conduct; while the latter are often unscripturally rigid in their examination of candidates for full church-membership, and generally strict in the infliction of proper censures on those who walk disorderly. Many independent Churches require a public examination of candidates, as well females as males, before they are admitted to the Lord's table; and in no small number of instances, a written experience, to be read by the Minister at a church-meeting, is considered indispensible, together with a professed belief in the doctrines of Calvinism.

Independent Societies of *long* standing have, generally, been furnished with a learned and intelligent Ministry, and enjoyed the advantage of well digested and solid discourses, consisting of a rich variety of matter. But Societies, of a more modern date manifest a very different taste, by their attachment to a kind of preaching more marked by desultoriness, wild declamation and a perpetual recurrence to two or three points of doctrine, than by an able defence and elucidation of revealed truth, a judicious developement of sound

Christian experience, and the enforcement of Christian duty on evangelical principles. This vitiated taste has been formed under the influence of a race of lay preachers, or those very imperfectly educated, who have abounded within the last thirty years. In too many instances this disease has been introduced into Churches, once, distinguished by their solid judgment and sound experience; so that persons, of low literary attainments and very slender theological furniture, have been chosen to succeed Pastors of solid worth. It is thought, however, that this evil has been decreasing for some time;—that preachers, truly respectable for their information and talents as well as piety, occupy many pulpits, once the theatres of loud vociferation and wild enthusiasm. The time has been, when Institutions called *hot-beds* were set up to rival and supplant schools following a more liberal plan of education. Latterly, the visionary patrons of those forcing nurseries, convinced that truly useful preachers can not spring up like mushrooms in a night, have been induced to give the young men under their patronage much greater opportunities for improvement. On the whole, it is thought, that genuine Christianity has made great progress in England within the fore-mentioned period, among those called, Independents, under a Ministry in many respects defective and irregular; and that, the popularity of mushroom preachers has constrained many Ministers, considerably advanced in life, and apparently fixed in their habits, to adopt a *manner* and style of preaching much more *natural*, impressive and eligible than what was prevalent when they begun their public career.

[To be continued.]

Constitution of the Presbyterian Church.

(Continued from p. 299.)

Chap. XII.—*Of Electing and ordaining ruling Elders and Deacons.*

SECT. I. HAVING defined the officers of the church, and the assemblies by which it shall be governed, it is proper here to prescribe the modes in which ecclesiastical rulers shall be ordained to their respective offices.

SECT. II. Every congregation shall elect persons to the office of ruling elder, and to the office of deacon, or either of them, in the mode most approved, and in use in that congregation.

SECT. III. When any person shall have been elected to either of these offices, and shall have declared his willingness to accept thereof, he shall be set apart in the following manner.

SECT. IV. After sermon, the minister shall propose to him, in the presence of the congregation, the following questions: *viz.*

1. Do you believe the scriptures, of the old and new testament, to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt, the confession of faith of this church, as contain-

ing the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures ?

3. Do you approve of the government and discipline of the presbyterian church, as exercised in these United States.

4. Do you accept the office of ruling elder [or deacon as the case may be] in this congregation, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof ?

After having answered these questions in the affirmative, he shall be set apart, by prayer, to the office of elder [or deacon as the case may be ;] and the minister shall give him, and the congregation, an exhortation suited to the occasion.

Chap. XIII.—*Of licensing Candidates, or Probationers, to preach the gospel.*

SECT. I. THE holy scriptures require, that some trial be previously had, of those who are to be ordained to the ministry of the gospel, that this sacred office may not be degraded, by being committed to weak or unworthy men ; and that the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the talents of those by whom they are to be instructed and governed. For this purpose presbyteries shall licence probationers, to preach the gospel ; that after a competent trial of their talents, and receiving, from the churches, a good report ; they may, in due time, ordain them to the pastoral office.

SECT. II. It is proper and requisite, that candidates, applying to the presbytery to be licensed to preach the gospel, produce satisfactory testimonials of their good moral character, and of their being regular members of some particular church. And it is the duty of the presbytery, for their satisfaction with regard to the real piety of such candidates, to examine them respecting their experimental acquaintance with religion, and the motives which influence them to desire the sacred office. And it is recommended, that the candidate be also required to produce a diploma, of bachelor, or master of arts, from some college or university : or at least authentic testimonials of his having gone through a regular course of learning.

SECT. III. Because it is highly reproachful to religion, and dangerous to the church, to intrust the holy ministry to weak and ignorant men, the presbytery shall try each candidate, as to his knowledge of the Latin language ; and of the original languages in which the holy scriptures were written. They shall examine him, on the arts and sciences ; on theology, natural and revealed ; and on ecclesiastical history. And in order to make trial of his talents to explain and vindicate, and practically to enforce the doctrines of the gospel, the presbytery shall require of him, an exegesis on some common head of divinity ; a presbyterial exercise ; a lecture or explication of a portion of scripture ; and a popular sermon, or other similar exercises, to be held, at several successive sessions, till they shall have obtained satisfaction, as to his piety, literature and aptness to teach in the churches.

SECT. IV. That the most effectual measures may be taken, to guard against the admission of insufficient men into the sacred office, it is recommended, that no candidate, except in extraordinary cases, be licensed; unless, after his having completed the usual course of academical studies, he shall have studied divinity at least two years, under some approved divine, or professor of theology.

SECT. V. Before the presbytery proceed to license the candidate, the moderator shall require of him the following engagements: *viz.*

1. Do you believe the scriptures of the old and new testament, to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the confession of faith of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures?

3. Do you promise to study the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

4. Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this presbytery, or of any other presbytery in the bounds of which you may be?

SECT. VI. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, and the moderator having offered up a prayer suitable to the occasion, he shall address himself to the candidate, to the following purpose: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority, which he hath given to his church for its edification, we do license you, to preach the gospel, wherever God in his providence may call you: and for this purpose, may the blessing of God rest upon you, and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart, *Amen.*" And record shall be made of the licensure, in the following form: *viz.*

At the day of the presbytery of having received sufficient testamonials, in favor of of his having gone through a regular course of literature; of his good moral character; and of his being in the communion of the church; proceeded to take the usual parts of trial for his licensure: And he having given satisfaction, as to his accomplishments in literature; as to his experimental acquaintance with religion; and as to his proficiency in divinity, and other studies; the presbytery did, and hereby do express their approbation of all these parts of trial; And he having adopted the confession of fath of this church and satisfactorily answered the questions, appointed to be put to candidates to be licensed; the presbytery did, and hereby do license him, the said to preach the gospel of Christ; as a probationer for the holy ministry; within the bounds of this presbytery, or wherever he shall be orderly called.

SECT. VII. When any candidate shall, by the permission of his presbytery remove without its limits, an extract of this record, accompanied with a presbyterial recommendation, signed by the clerk, shall be his testimonials, to the presbytery under whose care he shall come.

Chap. XIV. Of the Election and Ordination of Bishops or Pastors.

SECT. I. WHEN any probationer shall have preached, so much to the satisfaction of any congregation as that the people appear disposed to receive him as their minister, the session shall solicit the presence and council of some neighbouring minister, to assist them in preparing a call for him; unless highly inconvenient on account of distance: In which case they may proceed without such assistance.

SECT. II. On a Lord's day immediately after public worship, it shall be intimated from the pulpit, that all the members of that congregation are requested to meet on ensuing, at the church, or usual place for holding public worship; then and there, if it be agreeable to them, to prepare a call for to be their pastor.

SECT. III. On the day appointed, the minister, whose assistance has been obtained, shall preach a sermon, at the usual season for public worship; and after sermon, he shall announce to the people, that he will immediately proceed to take the votes of the electors of that congregation, in the case of whether or not he shall be chosen to be their minister. In this election no person shall be entitled to vote, who refuses to submit to the censures of the church, regularly administered; or who does not contribute his just proportion, according to his own engagements, or the rules of that church, to all its necessary expences.

SECT. IV. When the votes are taken if it appear that a great proportion of the people are averse from the candidate, and cannot be induced to concur in the call, the assisting minister shall endeavor to dissuade the congregation from prosecuting it further. But if the people be nearly, or entirely, unanimous; or if the majority shall insist upon their right to call a minister; then in that case, the minister after using his utmost endeavors to persuade the congregation to unanimity, shall proceed to draw a call in due form, and to have it subscribed by the electors; certifying, at the same time, the number and circumstances of those who do not concur in the call: All which proceedings shall be laid before the presbytery, together with the call.

The call shall be in the following, or like form, viz.

The congregation of being on sufficient grounds, well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you and having good hopes from our past experience of your labors, that your ministrations in the gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call and desire you, to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation; promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement, and obedience, in the Lord: And that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay to you, the sum of in regular payments, during the time of your being, and continuing the regular pastor of this church.

In testimony whereof, we have respectively subscribed our names, this day of A. D.

Attested by A. B. *Moderator of the Meeting.*

SECT V. But if any congregation shall choose to subscribe their call, by their elders and deacons or trustees, or committee or either, they shall be at liberty so to do ; but it shall in such case, be fully certified, to the presbytery, by the minister, or other person who presided, that they have been appointed, for this purpose, by a public vote of the congregation; and that the call has been, in all other respects, prepared as above directed.

SECT. VI. When a call shall be presented to any minister or candidate, it shall always be viewed as a sufficient petition from the people for his instalment. The acceptance of a call, by a minister or candidate, shall always be considered as a request, on his part, to be installed at the same time. And when a candidate shall be ordained, in consequence of a call from any congregation, the presbytery shall always, at the same time, ordain and install him pastor of that congregation.

SECT. VII. The call, thus prepared, shall be presented to the presbytery, under whose care the person called shall be ; that, if the presbytery think it expedient to present the call to him, it may be accordingly presented : And no minister or candidate shall receive a call but through the hands of the presbytery.

SECT. VIII. If the call be to the licentiate of another presbytery, in that case the commissioners, deputed from the congregation to prosecute the call, shall produce, to that judicatory, a certificate from their own presbytery, regularly attested by the moderator and clerk, that they are in order. If that presbytery present the call to their licentiate, and he be disposed to accept it, they shall then dismiss him from their jurisdiction, and require him to repair to that presbytery, into the bounds of which he is called ; and there to submit himself to the usual trials preparatory to ordination.

SECT. IX. Trials for ordination, especially in a different presbytery, from that in which the candidate was licensed, shall consist of a careful examination as to his acquaintance with experimental religion ; as to his knowledge of philosophy, theology, ecclesiastical history, the Greek and Hebrew languages and such other branches of learning as to the presbytery may appear requisite ; and as to his knowledge of the constitution, rules and principles of the government and discipline of the church ; together with such written discourse, or discourses, founded on the word of God, as to the presbytery shall seem proper. The presbytery, being fully satisfied with his qualifications for the sacred office, shall appoint a day for his ordination which ought to be, if convenient, in that church of which he is to be the minister. It is also recommended that a fast day be observed in the congregation previous to the day of ordination.

SECT. X. The day appointed

for ordination being come, and the presbytery convened, a member of the presbytery previously appointed to that duty, shall preach a sermon adapted to the occasion. The same, or another member appointed to preside in this business shall afterwards briefly recite from the pulpit, in the audience of the people, the proceedings of the presbytery preparatory to this transaction: He shall point out the nature and importance of the ordinance; and endeavor to impress the audience with a proper sense of the solemnity of the transaction.

Then addressing himself to the candidate, he shall propose to him the following questions, viz.

1. Do you believe the scriptures of the old and new testament, to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt, the confession of faith of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures?

3. Do you approve of the presbyterian church, as prescribed in the form of the government and discipline of the presbyterian church in these United States?

4. Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

5. Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry, from love to God, and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?

6. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity and peace of the church; whatever persecution, or opposition, may arise unto you on that account?

7. Do you engage to be faithful and diligent, in the exercise of all private and personal duties, which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel; as well as in all relative duties, and the public duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your conversation; and walking, with exemplary piety, before the flock, over which God shall make you overseer?

When the candidate is to be ordained as the pastor of a particular congregation, the following question shall be added.

8. Are you now willing to take charge of this congregation agreeably to your declaration at accepting their call?—And do you promise to discharge the duties of a pastor to them, as God shall give you strength?

SECT. XI. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the moderator shall demand of the people:

1. Do you the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive , whom you have called, to be your minister?

2. Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth, with meekness and love; and to submit to him, with humility, in the due exercise of discipline?

3. Do you promise to encourage him, in his arduous labor, and to assist his endeavors

for your instruction and spiritual edification?

4. And do you engage to continue to him, while he is your pastor, that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised; and whatever else you may see needful, for the honor of religion, and his comfort among you?

Sect. XII. The people having answered these questions, in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall kneel down, in the most convenient part of the church: Then the presiding bishop shall, by prayer, and with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, according to the apostolic example, solemnly ordain him to the holy office of the gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall rise from his knees: and the minister who presides shall first, and afterwards all the members of the presbytery in their order, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this purpose, "We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part of this ministry with us." After which the minister presiding, or some other appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge in the name of God, to the newly ordained bishop, and to the people, to persevere in the discharge of their mutual duties; and shall then, by prayer, recommend them both to the grace of God, and his holy keeping; and finally, after singing of a psalm, shall dismiss the congregation with the usual blessing. And the presbytery shall duly record the transaction.

[To be continued.]

Answer to a Disbeliever.

(Continued from p. 253.)

Sir,

IN your letter you began with insinuating against the truth of the Scriptures, from their not being given to all men, and from a want of uniformity in the opinion of those who receive them as unerring truth. On these points some remarks have been made in my former papers. You must be sensible, that those objections are far from going to the merits of the controversy between yourself and believers. Although they may bewilder the minds of superficial thinkers, who, for the present quiet of a guilty conscience, wish to be deceived, they vanish before a weight of evidence that the scriptures are indeed the word of God. You conclude with a more dangerous insinuation, "why are the scriptures necessary for men"? It is presumed you intend, why are they necessary for the greatest good and happiness of men? It is only on this supposition that the question is worthy of serious attention. Knowledge is necessary for happiness and right conduct. Although knowledge may be misimproved, and thus become a source of misery, yet it is necessary for happiness, and is the only possible means of bringing objects of enjoyment into possession of the mind; while ignorance, so far as it extends, absolutely prevents both rational and moral felicity. The divine mind is infinite, self-existent and necessarily most holy and blessed; the minds of creatures are finite in every power and

quality, derived, dependent, and in all respects both of faculty and enjoyment such as the Creator designed. Between finite and infinite there is a vast chasm, which must be forever unfilled: The former cannot be so enlarged as imperceptibly to pass into the latter. Let created minds be made greater than the highest angel can imagine, they are still finite, and thro' eternity, to them, infinite will be incomprehensible. Neither now or ever will the Deity or his counsels be comprehended by any beside himself. A vast foundation! on which God may claim, and creatures ever be under obligation to ascribe, praise, dominion, majesty and glory to him. To created minds the Lord hath given such faculties for acting and such capacities for receiving and enjoying as pleased him. He hath adapted to each other the capacities for enjoyment and the means of their satisfaction,

What is reason, the boasted reason of which disbelievers speak so much, as being sufficient to conduct them to the most glorious consummation of their existence? The question deserves a serious consideration, principally, because superficial minds frequently raise a competition between reason and revelation. The reason of a creature cannot make truth, for this depends on the eternal will of God; or if it be said that it depends on the nature of things, let us remember that the nature of things is no other than the will of God, through various means displayed to the understanding. Neither can any power of reason in creatures destroy truth. When the evidence of any truth or fact is presented to the understanding, reason cannot destroy it. Reason or reasoning is the faculty of the mind by which we see the agreement or disagreement of things, and in certain plain cases, are able to deduce one proposition from others, which were previously presented in a clear manner before the understanding. In no other sense, can human reason originate or even investigate truth, although some seem to suppose, that their own reasoning powers are within them a fountain of instruction, from which they may, at pleasure, draw all those truths, which are necessary for present guidance and eternal happiness. But it is not thus. We are not, neither are the saints and angels of heaven ever made so independent. Truth is the Lord's; he reveals or places it in the understanding in such ways as he pleaseth. In full knowledge of the powers given to men for their happiness and good conduct, he adapts the means of information to their nature and wants. In this he is as sovereign, wise and good, as he was in determining to create. There are several sources of evidence through which truth is brought to the understanding of men.

First the works of creation, with the powers, properties and qualities which every part appears constitutionally to possess.

Secondly, the government of these things by an all wise providence, upholding their existence, and pointing them, in a manner which men cannot discover, to their several ends.

The evidence of truth derived from these sources is commonly called the light of nature. It is common to all men, and if they are disobedient will be sufficient to condemn them in the end. Therefore, the mouths of heathen will he shut before God, when he judgeth them in righteousness.

Thirdly, a revelation from God, containing many truths concerning himself, his law, and the way of salvation, which nature and providence cannot teach.

Fourthly. The influences of the Holy Spirit, or the direct action of God on the mind.

Each of these is a source by which truth is brought to the understanding, and each of them appears to be necessary for men, after we consider their natural frailty and moral imperfection. If any inquire, "why is the revelation in the scriptures necessary for men"? We may answer them, why is evidence from nature, providence, and the action of the spirit necessary? There is as much room for one, as there is for the other of these questions: And thus we may proceed doubting, until all evidence of truth is banished from the world. The only cause why any prefer their own reason to the written word of God, as a source of information, is that the former is more easily accommodated to their own sinful hearts; whereas the latter claims an authority more difficult to gainsay; its words are "thus saith the Lord"—"obey and live"—"believe and be saved, disbelive and be condemned."

It hath been said that the holy scriptures, or a revelation from God, contains many truths concerning himself, his law an the way of salvation, which the light of nature and providence cannot teach. If this be the case they are necessary for the greatest happiness and best conduct of men. Compared with what we find in the holy scriptures, it is but faint beams of eternal power and Godhead which shine directly from the things which are made. The heavens declare his glory and the firmament shews his handy work, but if there were no other evidence of him greater than what these contain, the altars of men through the whole world, as they were at Athens, would be inscribed to the *unknown* God. The heathen generally profess to believe, in the existence of some powers superior to men, which they fear, and in their unholy way adore and worship: Still, with all the assistance they have had by tradition, and a remote intercourse with enlightened people, they have never attained to the scriptural representations of deity. Their most perfect descriptions of the supreme nature fall very far below what we find in the word of God. The light of nature can give but a faint conception of God's natural perfections, compared with what we receive from his word, and concerning his moral attributes, his holiness, justice, truth, grace and mercy, it is yet more deficient.

The light of nature can give us no information concerning his scheme of counsel, spread from an eternity past through an eternity to come. All which we know of this is from the word of inspiration, and when

known, it contains our best motives to duty, and a most exhaustless fountain of happiness.

Neither doth the providence of God, in the government of his works in this world, furnish such instruction concerning his character, as renders the light of revelation unnecessary. That the voice of his providence is very plain, in some cases, cannot be denied, but the instruction is limited to a few subjects compared with those we find in revelation. Indeed the holy scriptures are the principal key by which we understand the intentions and meaning of God in his providence. As instances; look on the present state of what hath been called the civilized world, on the wrath of man and state of the nations portentous of much ruin to come, and the human mind sinks under the prospect; but let us view the scene in the light of scriptural prophecy and there are many beams still left to cheer the Christian's heart. We conclude these things are necessary to glorify divine justice, and prepare the world for a rich display of grace in the millennial state.

Another instance: How often do we see the people of God bowed down under troubles in their own persons, their families, their properties, their reputation, and in all things which men hold most dear here below? Considering the Lord a gracious God, and peculiarly so to those who fear him, this looks unaccountable, until by his word we are informed that he is a God of covenant faithfulness, and that by his judgments on mankind he intends two purposes at once, to warn them of the desert and danger of sin, which all commit; also to humble his people through means of their affliction, and thus prepare them for the rewards of his grace. The holy scriptures are the only sure guide for understanding the works of Providence in all their variety of judgments and mercies in the common course of things, and in special interpositions of power and goodness.

There are three things for which a revelation is eminently necessary for fallen men: to understand the character and law of God, the purposes of his grace, and the means by which they are carried into effect. Although the heavens declare the glory of God, there are many points of belief concerning his nature and counsel, which could come to our knowledge only through a revelation. His omniscience and omnipresence, his power of acting in all places by simple volition, his incomprehensible manner of triune existence, each of which are essential to his nature, perhaps would not have been conceived by men, without the instruction of his word.

To understand his moral perfections the written word is yet more necessary. We are so far darkened by depravity, that with all means of information, we have but imperfect ideas of rectitude. The most correct of the Heathen have had no just conception of God's holiness. An idea of goodness, as it is perfectly distinguished from selfishness, never appears to have entered the fallen mind, except through the special aid of God's word and Spirit. This is

eminently taught in the gospel. The weakness of reason on all these subjects, when under the influence of a depraved heart, is illustrated by the ignorance of the heathen on theological and moral subjects, which is so great, that they have changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever.

If the reason of depraved men is so deficient in judging of the divine character, it must be the same concerning the moral law. Enough is known to condemn them perpetually for disobedience, but not to conduct them to the highest good of which their natures are capable. Certainly it must be consistent with the infinite wisdom and goodness of God to use such means of information as he sees will be conducive to their greatest blessedness and the best interests of his own kingdom; and for these ends a revelation is necessary.

A revelation is still more necessary to understand the purposes of divine grace and the means by which they are carried into effect. If God had not entertained designs of grace it is not probable the revealed word would have been given. It must for ever be above the power of human reason, without a revelation, to determine whether God will pardon sinners, and if he will through what means the purposes of his love can be effected, in a way consistent with his greatest glory.

In the word of revelation, he hath taught us the designs of his grace, and that he hath no pleasure in the death of sinners, any further than is necessary for the perfection of his kingdom and his own moral glory. Unassisted reason never could have assured us that God would exercise grace on any conditions whatever. There is in sinful minds such an evil spirit of retaliation, that judging of him from their own feelings, they could never have been assured that pardon was possible. All conscious sinners would have hoped it; the secure would have neglected the subject; but none without the express declaration of God could have been assured of the fact.

After sinful men were assured that sin, on some terms, might be forgiven; without the instruction of the holy scriptures, it would for ever have been to them an impenetrable secret by what means it could be done. Neither angel, or man, or any other creature would have devised the way in which God is just and the justifier of the ungodly. The Father's gift of the Son, the Son's acceptance of the arduous work, and the witness of the Spirit by his application of the benefits purchased, could never have been taught to men by reason or providential evidence. As the doctrine of the Trinity could not have been known by these, it follows as a necessary consequence, that without the revealed word of God, all disbelievers must have been left in full prospect of the blackness of darkness for ever, if the purposes and means of his grace had not been revealed in the sacred scriptures. On these grounds it is supposed, that a revelation is necessary for the greatest blessedness and good conduct of fallen men.

As the disbeliever's doubts were proposed briefly, the answer to them hath not been enlarged. If he hath any thing further to propose, and the Editor of the Magazine permits the correspondence, he shall be treated respectfully.

A BELIEVER.

Evidence for the truth, against the Disbelivers of Doctrinal and Experimental Christianity, drawn from their own appearance and feeling.

PURE and right reason is always a safe guide; but it is a fact, in this degenerate world, that men do not exercise this without the aids of God's word and Spirit. A corrupted heart corrupts the judgment, biasses reason, and blinds the understanding of men. Revelation and the influence of the spirit therefore become necessary to restore them to the proper use of reason, in determining on moral and religious subjects. This is not because the powers of reason and understanding are destroyed by unholiness: but they are perverted to a wrong purpose. This perversion is the sin and guilt of the transgressor. If any doubt this fact, let them observe mankind. They will find many think and act rationally on other points, who, on those of religion are confused in their conceptions. Let them read the character of the gentiles, who are destitute of a revelation, as it is given by Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, there also they may see to what the state of men would be reduced, if the word of God and its influence on society were wholly banished. But though there be this spiritual ignorance, which renders the word and spirit of God necessary for salvation, unquestionably, there is a foundation in the mind for all to feel guilty and self-condemned in the day of judgment.

Although the judgment and conscience are corrupted they are not destroyed. A guilty conscience judging from the evidence of truth, which all may receive, will be a swift witness to condemn the wicked. The unbelieving will judge and condemn themselves. "Their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, in the mean time, accusing or excusing one another." This is a source of uneasiness to the wicked in this world, and in another will be a fountain of condemnation.

It is the principal design of this paper, to lead the reader's consideration to a kind of evidence for the necessity and reality of doctrinal and experimental religion, which may be drawn from the feelings and appearance of those persons, who deny their power. When such persons are unwilling we should argue from the certainty and explicit declaration of the word of God; they must consent we should resort to their own feelings, and such manifestations of them, as are continually discovered in the occurrences of life.

Notwithstanding all which is said by those, who attempt to discredit doctrinal and experimental Christianity, it is evident they are not easy with their own infidelity. While they deny

God to be a being of such a character, as is believed by scriptural Christians, they are not satisfied with their own pretended sentiments concerning him: They are equally afraid of his justice and the manner in which his mercy is exercised. Although they profess to deny the infinite evil of sin; disallow the justice and eternity of such a penalty as the law denounces; the need of such an atonement as the gospel reveals; and of a new heart through sanctification of the spirit: yet it is manifest they are not satisfied with the scheme they patronize.

Although they live without prayer, and say that a solemn sense of God, and constant pains and watchfulness of their own hearts, are not necessary for coming to a safe end, according to their view of things, yet, it is evident they are afraid of their own condition. There is something in their breasts which may fitly be called "their thoughts, in the mean time, accusing or excusing one another." This is conscience, which gives them much occasional uneasiness; it is a power of their own intelligent souls, from which there is no flight, and which cannot be prevented from acting, in a higher or lower degree, but by the ceasing of existence. Men do not always notice what their own consciences dictate, and may be wholly insensible what the cause is of the uneasiness, which they sometimes feel: but that such uneasiness actually exists, the following things are a strong indication.

Although they profess to think there is nothing in doctrinal and experimental religion, and that no regard is to be yielded to them, as they have been commonly understood; still, they are continually insinuating against the bible, its doctrines, precepts and duties. And it is done, in such a manner, as shows that this holy book gives them pain, while they do not endeavor to practise its contents. This appears to be a sufficient indication such persons are not easy with their own state. There is something in their own bosoms, either reason or conscience which accuses them. They are pained and therefore fret: they wish to get more strength to their own system of disbelief, and every advantage which they can gain against scriptural religion, is supposed to be an acquisition of strength to themselves. If they thoroughly disbelieved, they would not be so evidently pained with exhortations to experimental piety. In general, men's enmity ceases when they are conscious their enemy is completely under their feet; but it is not so in this case, for they appear restless, lest the bane of their repose should rise again. This kind of foreboding, after men have gone a great length in their doubts, is a serious argument for the truth of religion both doctrinal and experimental. After all which its opposers have done, there is an internal monitor for God and the truth, which makes them afraid they are venturing their eternity on a refuge of deceit.

Another indication of this restless state in irreligious persons, is the trouble it gives them

to see others believe and practise according to the scriptures of truth. Sometimes this trouble arises into an enmity, which they cannot prevent discovering. While it is one of the plainest dictates of common sense and reason, that men must live and die for themselves; that eternity and every man's preparation therefor must be his own work; that every one must stand or fall for himself and himself only: yet they cannot bear, without pain, to see others believe and practise differently from what they love. It becomes their business to scoff at piety and the institutions of religion. Whenever we see any one distinguishing himself as a scoffer against the wishes and endeavors of others to be religious, although he be very hardened in sin, yet we may be certain his conscience so accuses him that he is not easy with his state. The sight of others believing and conducting differently makes him afraid. Such are willing that other people should take their way in worldly matters, in the choice of their own amusements, in their daily employments: but when the same freedom of action is exercised in religious concerns, it produces a sensible pain of mind, which shews that all is not well in the disbeliever's own heart, and that he is not so certain he is right as he professes to be. Seeing the conduct of others reminds him of his danger; and fear arises that he is descending to remediless ruin. An enemy within, an accusing or excusing witness inflicts the pain, while the blinded, guilty sufferer imputes all the blame to others. This shows that those, who profess to have the greatest certainty and fortitude in unbelief, do sometimes feel their foundations tremble, and that their certainty is not such as they profess.

It is very rare that an unbeliever or irreligious person, is willing to be thus described, which shews there is a pointed admonition within his own breast, either that his infidelity is shameful as against reason, or dangerous as against his duty. Disbelievers show a strange inconsistency in this matter. They try to disbelieve; take every method to discredit the truths of revelation; are constantly insinuating against the duties of religion; praise, read and recommend the most avowed advocates of infidelity: Still, they are ashamed of the appellation, and offended to be called disbelievers. This is a proof they sin against the light of their own consciences, and are ashamed of the name which they deserve.

Another argument for the truth, the necessity and the reality of both doctrinal and experimental religion, may be drawn from the despondency and fear of the disbelieving in scenes of trouble. That there are degrees of stupidity in disbelievers, and that all do not appear alike is manifest: It is still clear they want and cannot obtain a support by their unbelief. Such persons, although they have neglected prayer, when in affliction, are willing to have themselves and families the subjects of Christian intercession: although they have lived

otherwise, they are willing to die and go down to the grave under the forms of religion. In their last earthly hours they find the need of friendship with God; at this time, the idea of a Saviour and an interest in his merits would be very comforting to them. Although they have neglected the scriptures, they will receive it kindly to have any one read them by their dying bed side. This is a serious argument for the necessity of experimental religion and practical piety. However men may live, wish, and at sometimes think they believe; when they die, if reason be clear, they wish for a Saviour, who is stronger than themselves, and for some exercise of faith, which will bring the Lord nigh as a propitious God to assure them of his favor. They wish for a sanctifier who can cleanse them from an evil conscience.

Perhaps it may be objected, "do not Christians, who build their hope on the faith of Jesus Christ, as it is described in the scriptures, sometimes doubt? And is not this an argument against the soundness of Christianity?"

To this objection it may be answered. Although Christians often doubt, it is not whether the scheme of the gospel be true and good, nor whether the souls of the penitent may safely rest thereon: Neither do they doubt whether those, who disobey the gospel, and are destitute of its holy temper, shall fall under the punishment of God. Their doubts and uneasiness are, whether they have obeyed the gospel and received Christ by faith; whether their hearts have been sanctified by the spirit of God; in short, their doubts and uneasiness are, lest there should be so much of the unbeliever left in their hearts, as will cut them off from eternal life. With themselves, their want of obedience and joy in a glorious Redeemer they are discontented. It appears, therefore, that the anxiety of Christians and of unbelievers is entirely of two kinds: one is an uneasiness with themselves, their own imperfection, sin, and deficiency in the temper of a saint; the other, lest that scheme of disbelief and practical ungodliness on which they venture their souls, should land them in perdition.

To the reader this is a solemn warning that he be not beguiled with impiety. Impiety may be sweet to the unholy heart, may make men appear festive before the world, and prove a temptation to commit many sins; but will issue in destruction. In solitude, such will tremble lest they are not right; in death they will despair, fearing that a day of grace is passed without benefit. In that solemn hour all the hopes of infidelity will be cold and gloomy as the grave into which they are sinking.

MONITOR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE.

SIR,

YOU have frequently called for religious intelligence from those of your readers who have been conversant with the

recent awakenings in this part of our country. It has been hinted that the friends of Christianity are deeply interested in knowing, both the state of the churches, and the progress of saving grace among perishing sinners. This paper is submitted to your disposal as a testimonial of the unmerited grace of God; and as a devoted instrument to subserve your desire of gratifying those who daily remember Zion, and pray for the souls of men.

IN New-London, for the space of more than two years past, an unusual attention to religion has been visible. It has not, at any time, been general, nor very extensive. In the autumn of 1806, a small number of Christians held, weekly, a religious meeting. They were unobserved by men; but as the event has issued, they hopefully were noticed by the God of grace. Prayer was their principal exercise. Such was their apparent solicitude for the salvation of their fellow sinners, and for the prosperity of Christ's kingdom; that a spectator, "waiting for the consolation of Israel," could not refrain from hoping that God had, in the spirit of their supplication, sent a harbinger of his special grace.

Soon, the reason, why these children of the kingdom were made thus importunate, became apparent to the prudent observer. From Zion, secretly pleading with God, salvation soon began to go forth among surrounding sinners, who were ignorant of any peculiar concert of prayer for the welfare of their souls. No general impression of seriousness was visible in the town: but a sprinkling of individuals, without any connection by familiar acquaintance, or peculiar association for worship, at once became alarmed about the state of their souls. Few of them, at first, conferred one with another; but some began to tell their confidential friends that they knew not what was the cause of their fears and new emotions; but that some unseen influence had so unveiled their minds, that those eternal scenes appeared real and momentous, which, in similar description, they had, for years, surveyed without concern.

Before these alarms were extensively known, the subjects of them, together with their friends and neighbors, were called to the solemnities of an ordination. Many can bear testimony, that this was, peculiarly, a day of divine power upon their minds. Some were deeply affected with the awful responsibility, not only of the pastor, but of the people, which was about to flow from the sacred connection. Some, for the first time, considered how much God was doing for the salvation of sinners. In the light of his condescension to their spiritual concernments; and in a correspondent view of their listlessness and ingratitude; they saw their guilt and danger. But for many. God had prepared a word in season, from the gospel of his Son. Not only the duties of a clergyman were impressively described; but the importance of the gospel to the hearers of it; its proper effect upon them; and the state in which, appropriate, but unheed-

ed preaching leaves them, were so illustrated, that, through the power of the Holy Spirit accompanying the word, an effectual appeal was made to many consciences. Some remarks from the preacher on the folly and guilt of neglecting the bible, by divine impression, wrought such an effect upon the minds and in the habits of some hearers, as indicated the design of God, in honoring his revealed truth as an instrument in the work of salvation. Some who had read this book but little, and with little interest; now read, and found themselves condemned, and exposed to wrath.

Troubles, which had remained almost untold, were, by the awakened, now made known to those who professed a concern for souls. The enquirers for salvation were brought, by their anxious guides, to the place of weekly resort, where "prayer was wont to be made." The evening, which had been principally devoted to prayer, was henceforth, in greater proportion, improved for religious instruction. What had been but a handful of attendants, was increased to a large assembly.—Instead of one, two general evening meetings were established; which, together with several smaller assemblies for worship; and also a separate season for social prayer, have been, unremittingly, continued until the present time.

During the winter and spring of 1807, the work was more considerable than it has been at any later period. Still we flattered ourselves with the hope of a more extensive operation of the Holy Spirit. Though at this time, so much attention to religion was excited that, in many families, it was the principal topic of conversation; though our assembly on the Sabbath, especially that part which composed the audience in the galleries, had manifestly much increased, both in number and attention; though hundreds habitually attended the weekly assemblies for worship; though there was a continual resort of anxious sinners to those who would attempt their assistance; yet so great a proportion of the inhabitants of the town seemed to remain unconcerned about salvation; and even ignorant of the peculiar presence of God among us; and so much more copious and powerful effusions of the Holy Spirit were reported to us from various parts of our country, that we hoped the past were only the first drops of a plentiful shower, which we should finally receive. The cloud was still continued over us; but its contents were but moderately discharged. Before the close of this year, however, the members of our church were blessed with seeing the accession of forty-seven to their communion.

From the commencement of the year 1808, a moderate prevalence of awakening, and of hopeful regeneration, was perceptible, until the month of March. The work, from that time, stood in apparent suspension, until the session of the General Association in June. The prayers, the preaching, and the religious intelligence, publicly reported on this occasion were heard with great interest, and followed by much concern.

About thirty new instances of seriousness soon appeared.—Since the hopeful termination of these; the attention of a few individuals has been arrested; and their minds and hearts hopefully transformed. For several months past very little, except an extensive attendance on the means of grace, would warrant us to hope that we have not fallen into great stupidity.

Since Jan. 1808, thirty-six persons have been added to the church; increasing the former number to eighty-three. A small number more are with certainty, known to contemplate a public profession of their faith and hope in Christ. To say that, from present prospects, the list will soon be increased to one hundred, might be the expression of a sanguine hope.

The general characteristics of this work have been; in its progress, moderation, silence, long continuance, and an almost unfailing state of hopeful sanctification, consequent upon any considerable alarm; in its effects, hitherto, a persevering, steadfast belief of Calvinistic doctrines and regular life.

None of the subjects of it have expressed a distracting terror of mind: some however, much more than others, have been borne down, with distressing apprehensions of ruin.—Some have sought peace months before they found it; others, almost at the onset of their seriousness, were sensibly the subjects, both of that "peace which passeth knowledge," and of that "body of death," from which they longed to be delivered. Some have begun to hope, when they could perceive that they had very little evidence of sanctification: some though fearful of deception were secretly constrained to acknowledge, that they found in their views and affections, great reasons for encouragement: while others, differing from those in their acquirements of doctrinal knowledge though unable to suppress a hope, were very incompetent to decide, what, of their various emotions, was evincive of their sanctification.—Some, long before a sensible change in their affections toward God, the Saviour, and sin, have very justly apprehended the doctrines of the gospel; have well understood the state of man, the nature and import of the divine law, and the terms of salvation: while others have labored in darkness of mind, and with hardness of heart; until by an inconceivable change, they were transformed, at once, in their views, and in their affections. In many instances after a sensible *change* of feelings and enjoyments, the subjects of *it*, have been slow to believe, that so small a measure of their new love toward God and his people, of their new humility, of their new sorrow over sin, and of their new confidence, complacency and satisfaction in Christ, would be a credible testimonial of regeneration.—Hence with all their power, they have apparently suspended hope; until by long, and faithful recourse to the scriptures they have thence hopefully proved "the things which were excellent" in their own hearts; and have been constrained to say of Christ formed within them, "my Lord, and my God."

God has, in a most convincing manner, wrought among us, according to the counsel of his own will. Delicacy forbids an exemplification of this truth, by the narration of individual cases. But it is sufficient to have witnessed the sovereign hand of God, plucking from the downward course to ruin, sinners, amidst all the varieties of age, condition of life, habits, and character. The grey headed of sixty and the youth of thirteen have hopefully been born into the family of God as children of equal age. Altho' God by his discriminating grace in selecting a great proportion of the subjects of it, from among the children of pious parents, has passed an alarming censure upon licentious education; yet, by carrying the joys of his salvation, even to some prayerless houses he has removed all occasion of despair from those who have never been borne to the throne of grace on a parents heart. Christians have been taught, that the promise, was not only to them, and to their children, but to as many as the Lord, their God should call. A majority of those who have professed the name of Christ are youth.

May God with whom is "the residue of the Spirit" impart to those of every age and description, that "grace which bringeth salvation."

New-London, July 20, 1809.

Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Mr. Beecher, to the Rev. Mr. Storrs,—with a continuance of his Remarks to the Rev. Mr. Woodhull—dated East-Hampton, (L. I.) 20th January, 1809.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

SINCE your last the Lord has appeared in his glory to build up Jerusalem in East-Hampton. He hath done and is doing great things for us, whereof we are glad. The cloud, a skirt of which, first began to rain upon Gardner's Island, hath at length risen and spread itself over every part of this town, and is this moment raining righteousness upon us. This extension of the work of God, has been sudden and in several places of the town very glorious. In a North-West village containing about fifteen families—the people of God have been greatly comforted. A number are hopefully born again, and I am told there is not an individual in the village out of Christ, who is not in some measure apparently awakened; there is great joy in that village. One week was spent in almost continual prayer and praise. In Amaganset, a village of thirty families, there is great consolation to the people of God, and a great solemnity among the youth; a number deeply impressed; but as yet few have emerged out of darkness. In the town the presence of God is manifested by crowded audiences, profoundly still and solemn; by silent tears of convinced sinners, and blessed be the Lord, by the hopeful converson of a number to God. Among these I shall surprise you when I name our neighbor ——; who until lately has been justly classed

among our pillars of infidelity. He has fallen at the feet of Jesus and exhibits the greatest change of views and feelings I have ever witnessed. His soul is full of love to God and Christ, and of admiration of the doctrine, which, a little time since, he so violently hated—He now proclaims, "Behold the man that was born blind," and declares eagerly to every wondering unbeliever, It is Jesus that hath opened his eyes.

In Wainscot, a village of ten or twelve families so late as new year's day—there was no appearance of a work of God: since that time the power of the highest has descended like a rushing mighty wind, and in one week there has been eight or ten hopeful conversions; four of the converts are heads of families, and three of them brethren, forty and fifty years of age. I preached in the village yesterday, and find not a soul unawakened (young children excepted.) Several oaks of Bashan, who have stood unmoved through past revivals, are now humbled and bowed down, I hope to their speedy fall. It is a blessed day in Wainscot, a joyful day in East Hampton, and all her villages. I have never known the church to be so universally awake and blessed with comfort and a spirit of prayer. Our seven deacons are full of joy and humble boldness, and many beside them are becoming men mighty in prayer. The number of hopeful converts have arisen suddenly from fifteen or twenty, to between fifty and sixty, I cannot now ascertain the exact number; yet the work seems now as if just begun. Such is the statement of brother Beecher, and the subsequent continuance of the work has fully justified his most sanguine expectations; the uncommon attention among the people of his charge, so far from decreasing is rapidly increasing, to the present (February 25th.) Since the above was written, the village before mentioned, Wainscot, has been more abundantly watered by the shower, than any other district in the town. Small children of eight, ten and twelve years of age, have been hopefully made sharers, in the glorious blessings of this shower. Numbers have been hopefully converted, and others are now under the powerful operations of the Holy Spirit. It is a scene, dear sir, truly affecting and most happily calculated to rouse the dormant passions of the luke-warm Christian, to behold these little creatures which are just budding into life, praying with all the fervency of the aged saint, and praising their Creator with the zeal of a seraph—Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, was the affectionate direction of the Saviour of the world, to his disciples. By the influences of his Holy Spirit, he seems to be gathering to his arms the lambs of his flock, and rendering them trophies of his victorious grace.

In Bridge-Hampton there are appearances extremely flattering for the cause of our dear Redeemer; though the rain has but just began to descend, yet there are most pleasing indications of an abundant shower. The children of God are unusually awake to the importance of im-

proving the present crisis; conferences are frequent, crowded and solemn, in every part of the society. Twelve or fifteen within a fortnight are hopefully made subjects of divine grace. Vast numbers are alarmed and crying out, "what shall we do?" Some of the most flagitiously abandoned have been brought to a humble acknowledgment of divine sovereignty and the most humble confessions for their past offences. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes.—In South Hampton, there are very animating prospects, especially among the blacks. In Sag Harbour, there have been some late instances of hopeful conversion, and the people of God seem peculiarly awakened to activity and diligence, in the performance of duty. As far as I am able to ascertain the facts in relation to the characteristic features of this work of God, it appears remarkably clear, deep and genuine. Pungent convictions of the evil of sin, and the justice of God in the condemnation of sinners, attended with a great sense of the hardness of their hearts, of blindness and stupidity, seem to constitute generally the preparatory work of humiliation. New ideas of God, his law and government—of sin—of Christ and the way of life, attended with new affections of the heart towards God and the Redeemer, seem, so far as I can learn, the ground of the hopes entertained. That spirit of wild enthusiasm which has in many instances too much tarnished the work of God, seems here to have been superseded by a spirit of order and regularity.—The Lord has not uttered his voice in the whirlwind, the earthquake, or fire; but in the silent, solemn movements upon the heart. The most bitter enemies of religion can bring no railing accusation against the cause of God and the Lamb, in this case, from the unwarrantable zeal of its advocates. Their mouths are closed whilst the kingdom of Satan totters; they are unable to struggle effectually against the combined exertions of the valiant soldiers of Emanuel.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE.

SIR,

IF you deem the following account likely to subserve the great end of your valuable Magazine, it is at your disposal.

TO see one, whose character stands irreproachable in the view of his acquaintance, borne down into the dust of abasement in his own view, argues great knowledge of the depravity of the heart.

Such was the character of John Dunning, who left the world in the triumphs of faith and hope May 2d, A. D. 1809.

To a friend the evening before he died, in the full exercise of his reason, he declared, "This night will be my last; I wish to die just in the frame of mind, which I now enjoy; I am going to sleep in Jesus, God is my portion, and Christ is my Saviour." A few days previous to his death he observed, "I have been able to climb up Mount

Pisgah and to look over the Jordan of death, into the very pleasant land of promise, and to take a spiritual view, with an eye of faith, of those joys which I expect soon to experience." With a joyful hope of a blessed immortality, he died, after a long sickness and much pain, which he endured with uncommon patience and Christian fortitude. Not long before he died, he observed to a surviving brother, "I have such a view of the Divine glory as almost entirely swallows up and annihilates all my pains."

He died at the age of 26, in Brookfield, the place of his nativity.—After his death, were found his experiences written by himself. As they are concise and comprehensive it may be well to publish them entire.—They are as follows :

"In the full enjoyment of this world's happiness, I spent my days in youth, until a wise Providence saw fit that I should be afflicted with chastisements for my wickedness. I was taken with a violent fever, which threatened immediate death.—Had it taken place I should have left the world seemingly without a thought of my future state. Blessed be God, who is ever waiting to be gracious, I was not then taken in an evil hour.

'Tis to his care we owe our breath,
And all our near escapes from death;
Safety and health to God belong,
He heals the sick and guards the strong.

My fever soon abated and terminated in a lingering disorder, in which I continued for several months. Though dangerously ill, I had no serious apprehensions of mind, until it pleased God, in his infinite mercy, in some degree to open my blind eyes. I was now brought to a serious examination of myself, but did not readily discover the deception of the *wicked heart*. I thought I could not be so wicked as is represented of the sinner. But on a little further examination I discovered something of the deceitful heart. I found that I was acting entirely from selfish motives. I wished as *I thought*, to be prepared for death, and *thought* I should then be willing to die.

I wished to be happy, but had not a thought of the glory of God. In some measure there was shewn me, the depravity of the heart, that in every act I had some selfish object, from which I acted, and that I had no power to govern my own heart, nor to think a good tho't. It was not *yet* shewn me how the carnal mind was enmity against God, as was afterwards, which caused great striving in my heart. I had frequently resolved to renounce the devil and all his works, and to serve the Lord ; but did as frequently break my resolutions. June 24th, 1808, I did make a solemn dedication in the following manner :—This day I do in solemn consideration of my duty, give up myself to God, and do solemnly engage to devote myself to his service, in withstanding and abstaining from *all evil*, as he shall give me strength. I give up all worldly objects by looking unto Jesus for grace and salvation. Signed, *John Dunning*.

This did somewhat ease my afflictions, for I did endeavor to keep, in mind my *obligation*, and to act, from a dependence on

God, to whom I had solemnly devoted myself. On the next day, as I was riding, these words came to me, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." By viewing the love of Christ for his *redeemed*, my soul was filled with admiring complacency. He prays that they may be with him where he is: Oh! what transcendant love, his soul is so united to them, that he requests that they may be continually with him, that they may see his glory and enjoy his presence. This greatly animated me. There appeared to be a beauty set on all things created; I could look upon them with delight and complacency; I could, as I thought, raise my heart to God, with warm and affectionate love, for his tender mercies in Jesus Christ. This continued with me until the next day, when I was again left to the temptations of Satan and my own evil heart, which were greater than I ever experienced before.

I was tempted to believe that this complacency sprung from a selfish idea, which is the case when we imagine that we are going to be made happy, and we know not how, nor for what, and when we imagine that we are going to escape punishment. Then we feel our hearts to rebound with joy for our own preservation and happiness. This is a selfish joy, our love extends no further than our own preservation, we have not in view for our ultimate object the glory and worship of God. My heart now appeared to be very wicked. Indeed I had no heart to go to God, through Christ for help. The thoughts of these things were very burdensome to my mind. I could not keep them on my mind, neither could I keep them from me. Now did the wicked heart shew its depraved state by its rejecting holiness and godliness and cleaving to this world. How did it now strive to keep any thought of divine things from my mind! How entertained would it be in contemplating on worldly things, and in filling the soul with lusts and evil imaginations! How would it rise and swell with envy and malice at *every reproof!* To such a degree was this strife while it held, that I could find nothing that better resembled it, than a nest of hornets. While permitted to enjoy their natural course, they are peaceable and quiet. If disturbed, they are the most malicious. I was in this situation about two weeks, in which, was shewn me, as I hope, something of human depravity, of enmity against God, and of the absolute necessity of a Saviour. After this time I was more relieved. The striving abated and left me I know not how. There have since many doubts and fears past through my mind. But from strict examination and watchfulness, I am induced to hope in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who giveth us the victory, (with fear and much trembling.) O my soul, canst thou now hope in the merits of Jesus Christ? Canst thou now believe that thy name is recorded in the Lamb's book of life, which shall never be erased? Canst thou see the reconciled countenance of God,

in Jesus Christ? If so, happy art thou. That this may be thy happy lot, watch and pray, that thou mayest have a right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city, which may God of his infinite mercy grant for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

At the commencement of the last year of his life he wrote the following "birth day's reflections."

"This day closes another year of my life! How swiftly on, roll the wheels of time! With what imperceptible velocity am I hastened to the grave! Yet how much mispent time may be found in the last year! How many hours have been loitered away in tiresome vanities!—Time, O, of what infinite importance, were I sensible of its worth! Of what vast importance is one moment of time to a dying sinner! What would the damned souls give for one hour's probation! O, for a heart to improve every moment as it pases on, in repenting of sin and imploring God's mercy.

"Surely these short and fleeting moments need well be improved to fit one so unworthy, for the enjoyment of yonder eternity, in the presence of an holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

"O, that my sins and wickedness may be done away with the year, and appear no more! O, that I may usher in the *new* year with a *new* heart, and *new* affections, and that I may be enabled to spend the remainder of life in the service of my God.

"Likely, this is the last birth day, that I shall ever see! Likely, before another returns, this wasting body, will be laid in the dust. But the soul, the more active part, will be arraigned before the bar of God, there to give an account of the time and talents given me to improve while in the body. Solemn meditation! O my soul hast thou begun thy last year upon earth! Art thou dwelling upon the last moments of thy probation! Is eternity at hand! Is the already begun year to be the criterion, in which thy state is unalterably to be fixed, where there is no work, device nor repentance! These are not in the grave! Hither we are all swiftly hastening! The dead cannot serve God,—the living only are granted this great privilege. Life's brittle thread when once broken closes the scene. Is it so, my soul! Is this the only time which thou hast left thee to make thy peace with God, and to secure thine eternal salvation! And art thou lulled in a vain security of unthoughtfulness and stupidity! Start, O, be roused from thy trance, gird up thy mind, work while it is day, for the night is at hand, when thy feeble efforts shall be laid in the grave!—When once the closing scene advances, eternity is presented to view. O eternity! eternity! O my soul, listen to the small voice of the spirit! Hearken in this thy day to the gracious invitation of the Saviour! get an interest in his favor, then mayst thou leave the world in peace, then mayst thou be clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and admitted to join in harmonious concert with the saints and an-

gels, in the praises of God and the lamb forever and ever."

N. B. Let it be remembered, the Calvinistic doctrines were once peculiarly offensive to Mr. Dunning, but they became the joy and delight of his soul in a dying hour.

The Soliloquist.

No. 9.

HOW blessed is the privilege of praying and praising God. Once I dreaded prayer and my resentment rose against the minister of religion who urged on me the duties of the closet; now prayer is my only comfort, my only stay! How strange! that an infinite and most holy God should become a pleasing object of contemplation! That the law which condemns me should appear unexceptionable! yea more, that the very penalty, under which I am sentenced should be so just! how strange! that the providence of God, which was my daily fear, should now appear to me so ageeable, so wise, that I can cheerfully commit myself into its hands! What if this providence should afflict me? It will be right. What if this justice should condemn me? It will be gloriously just. What if the grace of the gospel should be finally denied me? I should have nothing to say in reply to a just sovereignty. My mouth, like every other sinner's would be stopped, and all glory would belong to God: I do not wish to be out of his hand. The idea that there is no God, law, government and providence would overspread the universe with deeper gloom, than I ever conceived, when I thought myself sinking to the depth of eternal misery. Let the Lord be just and on the throne forever. Let his kingdom prevail whatever my condition may be. The loss of an atom in the universe can be nothing.

How transporting my sight of the divine perfections in prayer this morning! I shall never enter the garden again without feeling a solemnity, a sense of glory which I never had before. Each bough of the tree under which I kneeled displayed the Creator's glory and goodness. The sky, empurpled by the beams of the approaching sun, was a fit emblem of heaven, and all nature silently praised God. Oh! it was at this moment, that the garden of *Gethsemane* struck my imagination. A prostrated Saviour, the Son of God, the brightness of the father's glory, praying, "if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." How my heart leaped within me and seemed to answer him, "O glorious Son of God, if it be possible let me be saved by thy merits, nevertheless, if I must perish through my guilt, let not thy glory ever be hidden from me!" Is not this an encouragement, that God will, at some time have compassion on me; but if he doth it must be unmerited grace.

A Circular Address from the Bible Society of Massachusetts, with the Constitution, List of Officers, Trustees, &c.

THE attention of the publick is respectfully and earnestly invited to an institution, which has just been formed in Boston "for the distribution of Bibles and Testaments."—Though we have been preceded in this pious and liberal design by the example, not only of a foreign nation, but also of a distant part of our own, it is believed, that the motives for our exertions are not superseded by theirs, or diminished by the distance, or the time, at which we have engaged in this auspicious undertaking.

It is generally known, that in the year 1804, a society was formed in London, under the patronage of some of the most respectable names among the nobility, clergy, and others of every religious denomination, for the grand and simple purpose of distributing the Holy Scriptures in all countries, and in all languages. So forcibly does the simplicity, as well as the usefulness of this design, strike every serious mind, that perhaps the first sentiment is that of wonder, that it had never before been adopted on an extensive scale in any part of christendom. The history of the operations of this magnificent establishment seems, however, to show, that it has been adopted late, only to be embraced with the more zeal, and prosecuted with the more success. The *five* reports, which this society has published, cannot fail to seize the attention and gladden the heart of every Christian who reads them. He will think he sees, at no great distance, the day, when every region of Europe, and perhaps of the eastern continent, is to feel the influence of this charity, for which christendom called, and thousands have already blessed the names of its authors.

In our own country, the Philadelphia Bible Society has the honor of taking the lead in this cause of God and of Christian benevolence; but, instead of extending their views to the whole United States, by making their society the centre of other connected establishments, they have thought it most proper to recommend the institution of similar independent associations* in the capital cities throughout the country. The vast extent of our territory, as well as other considerations of convenience, seems to justify the course, which has been taken. This society published an interesting address to the public, as well as a report, in which they give it as their opinion, that one fourth part of the families in this country are destitute of the holy scriptures. If, in our northern region, this estimate does not even *greatly* exceed the actual state of the facts, there is a call for the charitable activity of Christians, which ought not to be heard without a generous surprise, mingled indeed with some degree of humiliation.

In consequence of an "address to the Christian public," which had been previously cir-

* We have lately heard of the establishment of a similar society in Connecticut.

culated among us, about two hundred persons of different religious denominations met together in the Representatives' Chamber in Boston, on the *sixth* day of the present month, to consider the expediency of forming themselves into an association, for the purpose of distributing the Bible. It was readily and unanimously agreed to appoint a committee to draw up the necessary rules for the organization of such a society.—At a second meeting the regulations were produced and adopted, a subscription was opened on the spot, and instantly filled, officers and trustees were chosen, and the necessary measures taken to carry the design into immediate and effectual operation.

But this cannot be done without the aid of the rich, the activity of the good, and the general approbation and concurrence of the community. It is therefore in obedience to the orders of the trustees, and with the view of obtaining the contribution and the co-operation of Christians in every part of the state, that this address is written. To collect and present to the minds of the religious or the reflecting arguments in favor of this design, would seem almost superfluous, even if it had not been so powerfully recommended as it is by the addresses and the example of the societies we have mentioned; for now it is but to open the eye, and a scene of good presents itself.

You are invited, Christians, to lend your aid to the distribution of the Bible. The *revealed word of God* is, and ever has been the source of what is most valuable in human knowledge, most salutary in human institutions, pure in human affections, comfortable in human condition, desirable and glorious in human expectations. Without it man returns to a state of nature; ignorant, depraved, and helpless; left without assurances of pardon, lost to the way of recovery and life. It is the pearl of great price, to buy which the merchant in the parable sold all that he had, and yet was rich. Without this, wealth is poor; and the treasures of ancient wisdom, and modern science, a mass of inanimate knowledge.*

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* If the quotation of human authorities could add to the importance of this subject, it would be easy to produce a multitude of testimonies of illustrious men. The following declaration of the great Selden, just before his death, to Abp. Usher, is peculiarly impressive.

"That notwithstanding he had been so laborious in his enquiries, and curious in his collections; and had possessed himself of a treasury of books and manuscripts upon all antient subjects, yet he could rest his soul on none save the scriptures. And above all, that passage gave him the most satisfaction, [Titus ii. 11—14] as comprising the nature, end, and reward of true religion. *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"

Sir Christopher Hatton, also, a great statesman, a little before his death, advised his relations to be serious in searching after the will of

We live in a part of the world, where, through the goodness of God, almost every man has been taught to read; and where the scriptures, as soon as they are placed in his hands, are within the reach of his understanding. We live, too, in an age of christianity, when the Bible can neither be prohibited nor discountenanced by human authority. It can no more be locked up in the language of the learned, or disguised and mutilated by the dishonest or the profane. It was the most glorious consequence of the reformation to draw forth the book of God from the obscurity in which it had been kept, and by giving translations in the vernacular tongues, to throw open its treasures to the people, and thus also to secure them forever against its future loss. It was the unsealing of the fountain of life, that its waters might freely flow for the healing of the people. We too in New-England ought never to forget, that to preserve the authority of this book unimpaired, and to enjoy the privilege of a free con-

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God in his holy word; for said he —"*I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad!* Whatever other knowledge a man may be endowed withal, could he by a vast and imperious mind, and a heart as large as the sand upon the sea shore, command all the knowledge of art and nature, of words and things; and yet not know the author of his being, and the preserver of his life, his sovereign and his judge, his surest refuge in trouble, his best friend or worst enemy, the support of his life, and the hope of his death, his future happiness, and his portion forever; —he doth but go down to hell with a great deal of wisdom."

science enlightened and emboldened by its truth, our forefathers crossed the ocean with little more than this volume in their hands, and its spirit in their heart; and if there is now in the character and circumstances of their posterity any thing worth preserving, to this book are we to trace the good which remains, and look also for the improvement which is to come.

The novel sight of so many Christian denominations, uniting with adour to diffuse a knowledge of the common records of their faith, is peculiarly grateful in these days of division, and we hope not unacceptable to the great head of the church. He, who came *to preach the gospel to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind*, when he was reading this very passage out of the book of God in the jewish synagogue, added, *this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*— Christians, we call on you to reaccomplish this prediction among us, by sending the gospel, all simple and salutary as it is, wherever it may be wanted; to the dwellings of the poor and distressed; to the huts of the distant and solitary; to the chamber of the prisoner, and the cell of the criminal; and last, though not least, to the bedside of the old, whose eyes, dimmed with the rheum of age, can yet spell out its contents. With this in your hands, you go to the poor, not with the aspect of a partizan, to instil the notions of a sect, but in the fair and open guise of truth which they cannot suspect, to make

them an offering of charity in the spirit of love. You go as the stewards of the greatest benefaction, which mankind ever received; the bequest of the prince of life, *who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might become rich.* Surely, if it is lawful to estimate the good to be anticipated from an institution of this nature, by the evils which it avoids, or the inconveniences and objections which it obviates, we may hail the day, when the word of God, entirely unobstructed by the passions of men, shall run and be glorified in its course.

Is it said, that there would be no want of motives or need of arguments for the distribution of this "undoubted good," if it could once be believed, that there was any want of Bibles in New-England? Christians, it is to persuade you to join with us in *ascertaining this deficiency*, that we circulate this address. It is to request every man who hears of this society, and especially every minister of the gospel, to institute a diligent enquiry, as far as he can extend his sphere of information, to find where this book is most wanted, or will be most useful. It is only from the reports of active and intelligent christians, that we can know the whole range of good to which we are called: and we confidently hope, that no man, who has the opportunity or the power of dispensing a benefit like this, will be unwilling to contribute something to the funds of his own usefulness.

It is believed, that, in the eastern and thinly settled regions of New-England, where families are so distant from one another, that they have not the advantage of public worship, it also happens often, that, either through poverty or indifference, the Bible does not make a part of the furniture of the household. There are also, in almost every town, some poor, unhappy creatures, to whom such a gift would be grateful: the poorhouses and prisons therefore invite our earliest attention. There are also straitened families, unprovided with copies enough of the Scriptures to supply their wants; or, if they possess a single bible, it is so much worn, or so badly printed, as to require to be replaced. Heads of families may find, that many of their domestics have not supplied themselves with a bible, who would receive one from them with gratitude. It is true, that this, besides being our best, is our cheapest book; but it is also true, that men often value that as a present, which they had not the resolution to buy, even at the lowest price. In short, if in some cases we can only prolong the pleasures of aged christians, by furnishing them with more legible copies of their favorite volume, we shall not lose our reward with him, who cannot forget the gift of a cup of cold water in his name, to one of his little ones. Besides these cases, which present themselves to our first thoughts, we are confident, that a diligent enquiry will call forth the kowledge of many other unexpected wants, which this institution can supply.

Ministers of the gospel! on

you we have our first claims. Surely it is not necessary to suggest to you, that the success of your labors essentially depends on the familiar acquaintance of your hearers with that book, from which you profess to draw your principles and your precepts. We rely on your co-operation, as you look for the salvation of your people. For it is the simple word of God, which is, after all, of any intrinsic value, of any sure and sanctifying efficacy. The sermons of preachers, the explanations of critics, the commentaries, systems, and hypotheses of divines, and all the mass of theological learning, with which the world is crowded, are when compared with this book, but the halos round the sun, which gives them all the lustre they may have. You then have an interest in this cause, which it is in vain for us to attempt to enhance.

Christians, whom God has blessed with wealth! we ask you how, in the wide region of charity, it is possible to select an object, where bounty is less likely to be perverted; or where the giver is sure, that he does not even indirectly minister to the injury of his fellow-creatures? Here, though you should fail of doing the good you expect, you cannot be betrayed into a harm, which you do not foresee; but, on the contrary, if your bounty be not utterly lost, you know that its consequences will extend far beyond the present life, and the reach of present calculation.

The influence of early instruction in the Scriptures is sometimes very great, where it is not acknowledged; and it is an influence, of which many cultivated and uncultivated minds have been conscious, even after they have too much relinquished the good habits of their childhood, and among them the reading of the Bible. The want of this book in a rising family, where the parents are poor and indifferent, the children ignorant, rude, and abandoned, and the rest of the family left without the chance of gaining any religious ideas, is a subject of serious thought to the philanthropist, who only looks forward to the character of the next generation. For, from these another race is to be propagated, and, in this new country, perhaps other regions peopled. Need it be added, that the christian philanthropist is obliged to follow these fearful consequences to another and an eternal state of existence, where it will be too late to instruct, and where charity can neither ransom nor relieve!

When we consider, Christians, what it has cost to establish the religion of Jesus in the world, the miracles, the sorrows, and at last the life of the Lord of Glory, the labors and sufferings of the apostles, the privations of the early Christians, the blood of innumerable martyrs, and the prayers and studies, the preaching and laborious ministry of so many great and good men in past ages; and at the same time reflect, that, in consequence of the discovery of the art of printing, we have it now in our power to communicate at the easiest rate the knowledge of a gospel, for which so much has been expended; it seems

almost an insult to ask, if there is a disciple in Christendom, who can refuse his aid to such a charity. The request would indeed appear impertinent, if the consequences were less vast, or even less than infinite. When we consider too the zeal, with which proselytes have been made to every sect in history; the travels of missionaries to the extremities of the earth; the industry and generosity, with which error itself has been propagated; and the funds, which have been accumulated for the service of Christianity in many of its artificial forms; we are almost ashamed to importune you for contributions to circulate the simple word of God. But the very simplicity and greatness of the object forbid us to remain silent. We call upon you therefore in the name of your master! In this cause the voice of censure cannot raise a whisper against you, the powers of darkness cannot defeat you by mingling human passions with the object, and innumerable souls, who shall live for ever, will not cease to bless you.

In behalf of the Trustees,
WILLIAM PHILLIPS,
President.
Joseph S. Buckminster, Cor. Sec.
John Pierce, Rec. Sec.

Conversion of two Mahometans.

TWO Mahometans of Arabia, persons of consideration in their own country, have been lately converted to the Christian faith. One of them has already suffered martydom, and the other is now engaged in translating the Spriptures, and in concerting plans for the conversion of his countrymen.—The name of the martyr was Abdallah; and the name of the other, who is now translating the Scriptures, is Sabat; or, as he is called since his Christian baptism, Nathaniel Sabat. Sabat resided in my house some time before I left India, and I had from his own mouth the chief part of the account which I shall now give to you. Some particulars I had from others. His conversion took place after the martyrdom of Abdallah, "to whose death he was consenting;" and he related the circumstances to me with many tears.

Abdallah and Sabat were intimate friends, and being young men of family in Arabia, they agreed to travel together, and to visit foreign countries. They were both zealous Mahometans. Sabat is son of Ibrahim Sabat, a noble family of the line of Beni-Sabat, who trace their pedigree to Mahomet. The two friends left Arabia, after paying their adorations at the tomb of their prophet at Mecca, and travelled through Persia and thence to Cabul. Abdallah was appointed to an office of state under Zemaun Shah, King of Cabul; and Sabat left him there and proceeded on a tour through Tartary.

While Abdallah remained at Cabul, he was converted to the Christian faith by the perusal of a Bible (as is supposed) belonging to a Christian from Armenia, then residing at Cabul. In the Mahometan states, it is death for a man of rank to become a Christian. Abdallah

endeavoured for a time to conceal his conversion, but finding it no longer possible, he determined to flee to some of the Christian churches near the Caspian Sea. He accordingly left Cabul in disguise, and had gained the great city of Bochara, in Tartary, when he was met in the streets of that city by his friend Sabat, who immediately recognized him. Sabat had heard of his conversion and flight, and was filled with indignation at his conduct. Abdallah knew his danger, and threw himself at the feet of Sabat.—He confessed that he was a Christian, and implored him, by the sacred tie of their former friendship, to let him escape with his life. "But, Sir," said Sabat, when relating the story himself, "I *had no pity.* I caused my servants to seize him, and I delivered him up to Morad Shah, King of Bochara. He was sentenced to die, and a herald went through the city of Bochara, announcing the time of his execution. An immense multitude attended, and the chief men of the city. I also went and stood near to Abdallah. He was offered his life, if he would abjure Christ, the executioner standing by him with his sword in his hand. 'No,' said he (as if the proposition were impossible to be complied with) 'I cannot abjure Christ.' Then one of his hands was cut off at the wrist. He stood firm, his arm hanging by his side with but little motion. A physician, by desire of the king, offered to heal the wound, if he would recant. He made no answer, but looked up steadfastly towards heaven, like Stephen the first martyr, his eyes streaming with tears. He did not look with anger towards *me*. He looked at me, but it was benignly, and with the countenance of forgiveness. His other hand was then cut off. But, Sir," said Sabat, in his imperfect English, 'he never *changed*, he never *changed*. And when he bowed his head to receive the blow of death, all Bochara seemed to say, 'What new thing is this?"

Sabat had indulged the hope that Abdallah would have recanted when he was offered his life; but when he saw that his friend was dead, he resigned himself to grief and remorse. He travelled from place to place, seeking rest and finding none. At last he thought that he would visit India. He accordingly came to Madras about five years ago. Soon after his arrival, he was appointed by the English government a Mufti, or expounder of Mahometan law; his great learning, and respectable station in his own country, rendering him eminently qualified for that office. And now the period of his own conversion drew near. While he was at Visagapatam, in the Northern Circars, exercising his professional duties, Providence brought in his way a New Testament in Arabic. He read it with deep thought, the Koran lying before him. He compared them together, and at length the truth of God fell on his mind, as he expressed it, like a flood of light. Soon afterwards he proceeded to Madras, a journey of 300 miles, to seek Christian baptism; and having made a

public confession of his faith, he was baptized by the Rev. Dr. Kerr, in the English Church at that place, by the name of Nathaniel, in the twenty seventh year of his age.

Being now desirous to devote his future life to the glory of God, he resigned his secular employ, and came by invitation to Bengal, where he is now engaged in translating the Scriptures into the Persian language. This work hath not hitherto been executed, for want of a translator of sufficient ability. The Persian is an important language in the East, being the general language of Western Asia, particularly among the higher classes, and is understood from Calcutta to Damascus. But the great work which occupies the attention of this noble Arabian, is the promulgation of the Gospel among his own countrymen; and from the present fluctuations of religious opinion in Arabia, he is sanguine in his hopes of success. His first work is entitled, (Neama Besharatin lil Arabi) *Happy News for Arabia;*" written in the Nabuttee, or common dialect of the country. It contains an eloquent and argumentative elucidation of the truth of the Gospel, with copious authorities admitted by the Mahometans themselves, and particularly by the Wahabians. And, prefixed to it, is an account of the conversion of the author, and an appeal to the members of his well-known family in Arabia, for the truth of the facts.

The following circumstance in the history of Sabat ought not to have been omitted. When his family in Arabia had heard that he had followed the example of Abdallah, and become a Christian, they dispatched his brother to India (a voyage of two months) to assassinate him. While Sabat was sitting in his house at Visagapatam, his brother presented himself in the disguise of a Faqueer, or beggar, having a dagger concealed under his mantle. He rushed on Sabat, and wounded him. But Sabat seized his arm, and his servants came to his assistance. He then recognized his brother. The assassin would have become the victim of public justice, but Sabat interceded for his brother, and sent him home in peace, with letters and presents, to his mothers's house in Arabia.

"The preceding narrative of the recent conversion to the Christian faith of two Mahometans, and of the martyrdom of one of them may be depended upon as a fact. It is extracted from a Sermon preached last February in Bristol, England, —for the Benefit of the "Society for Missions to Africa and the East," by the Rev. Claudius Buchanan, who lately returned from a mission to the East-Indies, where he became intimately acquainted with one of the subjects of the narrative. The Sermon, from which the extract is taken, is one of the most valuable publications which have appeared on the subject of missions to the east; it contains much interesting information respecting the state of religion in that country; and the animating prospect which it presents concerning the progress of light in that benighted part of the world cannot fail to glad-

den the heart of every reader who feels a desire for the enlargement of the kingdom of the Redeemer,—of him whose coming to bless the world was announced to certain sages by the appearance of a "star in the East." The Editor would gladly enrich the pages of this Magazine with the whole of the Sermon, but its length renders it unsuitable for insertion in a work of this kind, as it cannot be all published in one number. It is now reprinting in Haatford and will soon be ready for sale, for the benefit of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, and of the Connecticut Bible Society. The Editor feels it his duty to recommend the Discourse to his readers. They will find themselves amply compensated for the trifling sum which they must pay for it, in the pleasure which its perusal will afford them; at the same time they will have the satisfaction of contributing a mite for the benefit of two Societies, the importance of which is very strikingly illustrated, by the information communicated in Mr. Buchanan's most excellent Sermon."

THE EDITOR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE.

THE increase of liberal institutions in our country, for the relief of the poor and distressed of every description, and to disseminate sacred knowledge is a proof of the growing influence of Christian piety. To do good and communicate is a leading feature in the character of a Christian. We find by experience there is more difficulty in originating and organizing liberal institutions, than in finding the means to execute their charitable intentions. A number of small societies, within the narrow sphere in which they act, may do more good, wipe from the eye of distress more tears, and diffuse more moral instruction, than can possibly be done by any general institution. I am led to these reflections by the recent formation of two Female Societies in this place.—There are more than fifty towns in Connecticut, where similar Societies would advance the interests of humanity and religion, and to excite the same spirit, I make this communication.

MARIA.

Constitution of the Hartford Female Beneficent Society.

THE name shall be the "Female Beneficent Society."

The primary and general object of the Society, shall be, to relieve the distressed, and to promote knowledge, virtue and happiness, among the female part of the community.

The particular design shall be to raise funds for the benefit of the poor belonging to the City of Hartford, but relief may be extended to others if it is deemed necessary.

The next object shall be to seek out and assist such persons as wish for regular employment, or have been reduced by misfortune, and are prevented by diffidence, or delicacy of feeling, from soliciting aid.

Another object shall be to devote a part of the money contributed to the education of young females, who shall be

placed under the care of such serious person or persons, as will give them instruction in reading, sewing, and good housewifery, and impress them with moral and religious principles. At a proper age, the Society shall endeavor to place them in a situation to obtain a living for themselves.

Every subscriber who shall pay 25 cents per quarter, can be a member of the Society, and any female who will advance 15 dollars, shall be a member without any further payment.

The Officers of the Society shall be,

1st, A President, whose duty it shall be to preserve order, to propose questions named for dicussion, and to declare the decisions. She shall have the casting vote. With the advice of the managers, she may call special meetings of the Society. When the President is absent, the chief Manager presides.

2d, A Secretary, who shall keep a register of the names of the members, receive the subscriptions quarterly at her house on the third Tuesday in August, November, February and May, and pay them to the Treasurer; she shall attend the meetings of the Society, and record their proceedings.

3d, A Treasurer, whose business it shall be to take charge of the monies collected for the Society, and when called upon to render an account of the funds, and of her receipts and payments. She shall pay out no money without a written order from the chief Manager.

4th. Thirteen Managers, whose business it shall be to seek out proper objects of relief for the Society. They shall have a right with the advice of the chief Manager, to draw upon the Treasurer for such sums as she shall deem necessary, and shall give account to the Society how those sums have been applied. They shall meet once a month on such days as they shall think best, and choose from among themselves a chief Manager who shall preside at their meetings. At a meeting where three are present, business may be transactied.

5th, A Committee of two, who shall meet on the week before the meeting for choosing officers, and examine the accounts of the Secretary and Treasurer, and make report to the Society.

There shall be two stated meetings in a year, viz. on the first Wednesday in October, and first Wednesday in April. Ten members shall form a quorum.

The officers are to be chosen annually on the first Wednesday in April. Every meeting of the Society shall be opened with prayer.

Any member may withdraw her name by paying what is due, and giving orders for that purpose to the Secretary.

The Society have agreed to have a sack provided, which shall be placed in a situation where each member may, if she pleases, put in at any time, clothing or other things which may be useful to the poor. This sack will be lodged at the house of the chief Manager, who with the assistance of a majority of the Managers, may dispose of the contents in such a manner as shall by them be thought best.

The Names of the Officers.

Mrs. Ruth Patten, *President.*
Mrs. Mary Averill, *Secretary.*
Mrs. Elizabeth Rogers, *Treasurer.*

Mrs. Anne Hosmer, Mrs. Mary Grew, Mrs. Esther Talcott, Mrs. Esther M. Chester, Mrs. Bathsheba Ely, Mrs. Lucy M. Brace, Rebecca S. Burr, Laura Colton, Mary Olcott, Ann Hosmer, Ruth Bull, Mary Hempsted, and Dolly Babcock, *Managers.*

There are at present 170 subscribers, and many more will soon be added. It is also expected, that the affluent will make use of this institution, as an organ for dispensing their more liberal charities.

The Cent Society.

THE young Ladies desirous of contributing a mite towards promoting the important object for which

the Connecticut Bible Society was instituted, agree each of them to pay at least one cent per week, to commence from the time annexed to their respective names. The money to be paid to that one of their number who shall be designated from time to time by the Treasurer of the said Society, to receive the same, and the person thus receiving it is to account with the said Treasurer once in three months for what she shall receive within that time.

Present number of subscribers 152.

ORDINATION.

On Wednesday August 16, the Rev. *Allen M'Lean* was ordained to the pastoral care of the Church and Society in Simsbury. The Rev. Jonathan Miller made the introductory prayer; the Rev. Andrew Yates preached from Acts xx. 27. "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." The Rev. Doctor Perkins made the consecrating prayer; the Rev. Rufus Hawley gave the Charge; the Rev. William F. Miller gave the Right hand of Fellowship; and the Rev. Noah Porter made the concluding prayer.

ORDAINED at Westford, July 5th, the Rev. *George Colton*. Rev. Mr. Bull, a gentleman from England, made the introductory prayer; Rev Mr Hotchkin of Greenville preached the sermon from Isaiah 52d 8th; Mr. Benedict of Franklin made the consecrating prayer;—during which, the whole council imposed hands; Mr. Kingsbury, gave the charge; Mr. Chapman of Burlington presented the right hand of fellowship; Mr. Fenn of Harpersfield made the concluding prayer; Mr. Williams of Springfield, made an address to the church; and Mr. Griswold of Hartwicke, to the people.

DIED, on the 23d of August last, Mr. LEMUEL LINCOLN, aged 31 years, one of the Publishers of this Magazine. The publication will in future be continued by Mr. Peter B. Gleason, the surviving partner.

ED.

Donation to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.

1809.

August 14. Silas Hubbard, collected in new-settlements, $2 50